

THE DAY THEY MARCHED



ONE DOLLAR

the day they marched

the day they marched

edited by
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with an introduction by
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chicago

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we shall overcome
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editor's note

In assembling this volume of photographs and documents directly relating to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, we have looked at thousands of photographs especially made for Johnson Publishing Company. Just as no spectator saw exactly the same thing, the eyes of the various cameramen recorded different aspects of these same situations. This book is intended to commemorate that historic occasion by capturing in word and picture the mood, the sense of dedication and overall the tremendous unity of all of the participants.

We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of all of the writers and photographers who "covered" the March, and whose impressions have been left in type and film.

Our special thanks to the office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for permission to use the text of Dr. King's address.

We are particularly grateful to Publisher John H. Johnson who gave us a free hand in assembling the photographs and setting the "tone", and whose own enthusiasm for the goals of the March permeated to all of his staff.

Any inadequacies or shortcomings are my own.

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contents

editor's note . . .	v
photographers . . .	vi
lerone bennett jr. • the march . . .	3
john f. kennedy • statement . . .	76
president of the united states	
marcher's pledge and goals . . .	78
martin luther king jr. • i have a dream . . .	81
we shall overcome . . .	86



the day they marched





**HOWARD
JOHNSON,
SERVE
EVERYONE
EVERYWHERE
CORE**

**WE MARCH
FOR
EFFECTIVE
CIVIL RIGHTS
LAWS
NOW!**

**THE BAPTIST
MINISTERS
CONFERENCE
OF WASHINGTON-DC AREA
Are Calling For Action**

**THE BAPTIST
MINISTERS
CONFERENCE
OF WASHINGTON-DC AREA
Are Calling For Action**

**NO
U.S. DOUGH
TO HELP
JIM CROW
GROW**

**WE DEMAND
AN FEPC
LAW
NOW!**

**WE DEMAND
VOTING
RIGHTS
NOW!**

**WE MARCH
FOR
JOBS
FOR ALL
NOW!**

**WE MARCH
FOR
EFFECTIVE
CIVIL RIGHTS
LAWS
NOW!**

**FIRST CLASS
CITIZENSHIP
NOW!**

the march

Lerone Bennett, Jr.

IT WAS the beginning of something, and the ending of something.

It came 100 years and 240 days after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

It came like a force of nature.

Like a whirlwind, like a storm, like a flood, it overwhelmed by its massiveness and finality.

A quarter-million people were in it, and of it; and millions more watched on TV and huddled around radios.

There had never been anything quite like it.

A TV spectacular, a Sunday School picnic, a political convention, an impressive demonstration of Negro unity, "a visible expression of interracial brotherhood," an almost unprecedented exhibition of resolve, a new concept of lobbying, a living petition, a show of strength, an outburst, a call to the national conscience: the mammoth March on Washington was everything they said it was, and more; and it moved men and women as they had never been moved before.

It threatened, at points, to become a meaningless gesture, an extravaganza, an outing, a prayer said to the wind. But the people, the old ladies and the young boys, the students and the dreamers, the young girls in bright babushkas and the old men in shiny blue suits, the people—they redeemed it, and made it something to remember.

They came, these people, from points all over America, and several overseas; they assembled in Washington on the grassy slopes of the Washington Monument and walked about a mile to the Lincoln Monument where they said with their bodies that the Negro had been waiting for 100 years and 240 days and that he was still not free and that 100 years and 241 days were too long

to wait. There, in balmy, 84-degree weather, in the shadow of Lincoln and the presence of God, they recalled (in Archibald MacLeish's phrase) "the holy dream we were to be"—recalled the dream and made it flesh and blood and bone in their black and white togetherness.

This, then, was the March: a long and uncomfortable trip on trains and buses and planes, a short walk down Constitution and Independence Avenues, words said in the sun and, beneath it all, a quiet anger, a fierce hope and the wind and the fire of a dream.

Dreams brought the demonstrators to this particular place at this particular time—dreams and drastic demands within them. We are accustomed now to the dreams of the young, but there is a certain poetry in the fact that this march was the product of the dreams of a New Negro who was born in 1889. For Asa Philip Randolph, seventy-four, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, the March was the culmination of a half-century of agitation. He had come uphill all the way, this old man; he had won the first FEPC order from President Roosevelt in 1941 by threatening a March on Washington and he had been threatening marches ever since. In January, 1963, he suggested a march to dramatize the plight of unemployed Negroes; but nobody was listening and nobody seemed to care. Then came Birmingham; then came the thunder of Negroes in the streets; then came the Summer of Discontent; and men remembered the Old Man and what he had done in 1941 and what he wanted to do in 1963. In the end, the five major Negro organizations—NAACP, SCLC, "SNICK," CORE and Urban League—closed ranks behind Randolph and his dream. A Jew, a Catholic, a Protestant and a labor leader completed the cast of leaders. They named Randolph director and the Old Man went back to his Harlem office, and the years fell from him. He chose as his deputy director Bayard Rustin, a brilliant mover and shaker in the Freedom Movement.

Before Randolph and Rustin lay a formidable task: moving two hundred thousand or more people into Washington and out in one day, feeding, organizing and, to be blunt, restraining them for twenty-four hours. That this was done, and with such aplomb, tells much about the quality of Negro leadership.

Through the late summer, as the fires of discontent burned in the streets, Randolph and his aides prodded, pushed and organized. As they worked, ripples of fear spread across the nation. Washington, D.C., already more than one-half Negro, was hysterical; the general feeling, the *Washington Daily News* said, was that the Vandals were coming again to sack Rome. Powerful politicians and big men in labor and business urged the leaders to abandon the March; it was unwise, they said, imprudent, unnecessary and perhaps illegal. The press took up the cry, saying with increasing stridence that the March was social dynamite and that violence was almost unavoidable. Despite the furor, or perhaps because of it, preparations continued. In a yellow building in Harlem and in another yellow building in Washington, M-O-W men wrestled with unprecedented logistical problems: over one thousand five hundred organizations were contacted, regional directors were named, organizational manuals were issued.

March leaders went to extraordinary lengths to insure a peaceful demonstration. As originally conceived by the more venturesome leaders, the March was to be a rasp across an exposed nerve. One student leader announced early in the summer that he and his wife and baby planned to pitch a tent on the White House lawn. Others spoke of sit-ins in the offices of James Eastland and other Senators. The leaders vetoed these plans; they banned inciting signs and forbade picketing at the White House and on Capitol Hill. An internal police system was set up to isolate and exclude troublemakers and Communists. The March, according to the leaders, was for Freedom and Jobs. The immediate aim was to prod Congress on the pending Civil Rights Bill.

As the big day drew near, excitement grew. In the beginning, it seemed that the March would be a flop. Newspapers reported a lack of interest in the March; they said sponsors were having trouble filling chartered trains and buses. In this, as in other things about the March, the press was wrong. Toward the end of August, March headquarters was swamped with requests from organizations who wanted to get on the bandwagon. The feeling was growing—it was in the air—that this one was going to be big and, as always, men and organizations wanted to be with the winner.

Staff members were hard at work in New York, Martin Luther King, Jr., was in his Atlanta home, A. Philip Randolph was in his Harlem apartment when the wheels began to turn. Weeks before the March, Jay Hardo, an eighty-two-year-old man, left Dayton, Ohio, on a silver bicycle with a large American eagle on the handle bars. A week or so later, Ledger Smith, an NAACP member, left Chicago on roller skates. Four days before the March, David Parker, a Los Angeles pants presser, got into a battered old Ford with five friends and started the three thousand mile trip across the nation. Parker said he was going to Washington "because my people got troubles."

In the final week, the ghettos of America stirred. In thousands of homes, bags were being packed, lunches prepared, good-byes said. In thousands of bars and barber shops, the thing was being discussed pro and con. No one knew at this point how many would be there, but the feeling was growing that everybody who could, ought to be there.

Monday came, August 26, and the feeling took shape and substance. They were leaving now from New Canaan, Connecticut, and Barre, Vermont; they were leaving now from towns in Oregon and cities in California, from Las Vegas, Nevada, and Seattle, Washington, from Durham and Greensboro, from West Memphis and Selma, from Dallas and St. Paul and Miami and Gary.

Monday night came and twenty-three people, including three whites, assembled at the Dunbar Community Center in Little Rock and got on a bus; farther South the scene was repeated in Mississippi and Louisiana. Already now, cars were on the way, from the West Coast and the Gulf Coast. And twelve youths from the Brooklyn chapter of CORE were walking down the East Coast.

Monday night wore away and Negroes and whites gathered at the General Baptist Convention, Inc., headquarters in Milwaukee. At 7:13 A.M., three buses pulled out with more than one hundred demonstrators. That same morning, Tuesday, August 27, four busloads left St. Louis and six left Birmingham.

Across the country, in Washington, D.C., the tempo picked up. The leaders arrived and set up command posts; the vanguard of the well-heeled arrived and established beachheads in the lobbies of the swank hotels. By Tuesday night, practically all of the ten leaders were domiciled in the Statler-Hilton where they worked late, tightening up and refining the plans.

As they worked, trains and planes began to move. Two chartered trains left Chicago. Chartered trains left Pittsburgh and Detroit. Another Freedom Special was pushing up the East Coast from Jacksonville, making stops at Waycross, Ga., Savannah and Richmond.

All across the nation now people were moving, going in ones and twos and hundreds to a rendezvous with history. As the sun moved west, a chartered plane took off from Los Angeles' International Airport. A few hours later, another plane, with about thirty stage and screen celebrities, including Marlon Brando and Harry Belafonte, jetted into the air from Lockheed Airport.

It was past midnight now and New York was ablaze with lights. Tens of thousands were assembling at staging areas in bus depots, community houses and churches. The first of four hundred and fifty chartered buses left the Armory on 143rd Street at 1:30 A.M. Wednesday. Thereafter cars and buses of all descriptions streamed through the Lincoln Tunnel.

The dawn hours in Harlem on August 28 were bright with people and colors and hopes. Thousands of bystanders gathered at CORE's staging area on 125th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues and cheered the demonstrators on ("You tell 'em; tell 'em for me"). At Pennsylvania Station, where fourteen special trains left between 2 A.M. and 8 A.M., authorities reported the largest early-morning crowd since the end of World War II.

Wheels turned, engines throbbed and the great mass moved towards Washington in a massive orchestration of sound and movement and emotion. As they came, on buses and trains and in cars, they sang Spirituals, prayed and talked. In the air, over Nevada, a woman from California tried to explain to her white seatmate the meaning of Negro-ness. "You can never know what it's like to be a Negro. No matter how hard you try, you can't imagine going into a hamburger shop with your children and being told, 'We don't serve niggers here'." On the ground, in Wisconsin, Fletcher Gee was saying: "I'm going to illustrate my willingness to be what I am. I'm going to illustrate my desire to be what I believe I should be."

At about the same time, Melva Franklin, a New York nurse's aide, was saying, in Pennsylvania Station, that she was "doing this for my grandmother, grandfather, and everyone else. This is the day my grandmother wanted to see." Far away, in a train rushing across Indiana, a woman was saying that she was "doing this for my grandchildren."

And, in trains hurtling across Indiana, buses speeding through Delaware, planes high above Ohio, men and women were singing: "Good news, Freedom's coming."

On they came, on wheels of every description, and Washington waited, tight with tension. The day, Wednesday, August 28, 1963, dawned clear and slightly cool, with the streets deserted and a large number of white inhabitants in self-imposed exile in Virginia and Maryland enclaves. The Government and private businesses, fearing violence or traffic tie-ups or both, had urged

employees to take the day off; bars and whisky stores had been closed. Washington, in the early morning, looked like a city under siege. Burly MPs, black and white, directed traffic and scurried about the city in jeeps and command cars.

The crowd gathered slowly. At 7 A.M., there were only one thousand people at the Washington Monument. There was fear in some quarters and hope in others that the expected crowd wouldn't come.

But the crowd continued to increase, slowly at first and then with a rush. At 9:30 A.M., there were forty thousand people around the tall white pencil of the Washington Monument; an hour later, there were fifty thousand and police reported that the Baltimore-Washington expressway was packed solidly with cars and buses moving "bumper to bumper." By 11 A.M., there were at least ninety thousand people on the grassy slopes of the Monument and the Ellipse behind the White House. When the parade began, there were close to two hundred thousand demonstrators.

There had never been such a crowd.

There were society women in new hats and old women in Sunday go-to-church black; there were bright young men from the top level of the agencies, looking important and hurried, and lost, there were pretty girls and plain ones, priests, preachers and rabbis, union members, seminarians, housewives and teachers.

One remembers most the faces and the feet. There were feet of every imaginable description, some of them bare, some of them stylishly shod; the feet of old women who had stood long over white folks' stoves and the feet of old men who had stood long in mines and factories; feet used to the outdoors, flat, square, strong, feet that ached easily and were favored gently as the people walked. These feet contrasted strongly with the feet of the young, feet fresh from college campuses and offices, feet modishly shod, free, it seemed, from the bunions and the cal-

nuses and the memories of the old. Of whatever description, however shod, the feet moved in protest and affirmation. And, above them, the faces shone with boundless pride, and determination. There were the faces of the old, graven with hope and faith; the faces of Northern Negroes, glad at last to be on the firing line, and, above all, the faces of the Southern young, terrible with anger, terrible with determination, terrible with pride.

The crowd was gay and sad, happy and angry. White correspondents went away and wrote long articles on "the remarkable sweetness" of the crowd, proving once again that they do not understand Negroes—or themselves. They had expected a wild mob and what they saw were students, organization men and old women who could have been anybody's aunt. And so they were astonished, not realizing that things are seldom all one thing or another, that men can smile and cry inside, that they can bleed and sing to staunch the wound.

There was about this crowd the wonderful two-tongued ambivalence of the blues. It was neither all one thing nor all another. Many moods competed, but two dominated: a mood of quiet anger and a mood of bouyant exuberance. There was also a feeling of power and a certain surprise, as though the people had discovered suddenly who they were and what they had.

They had come from different places, in different ways, for different reasons. But, once there, they were welded into a whole and a living thing. The magic of the crowd began to work on them and they moved, pulled along by the force of an idea.

The people stood for a long time in the assembly area, listening to speeches and songs from stage and screen celebrities. Then, spontaneously, they began to move. Little knots stepped into Constitution Avenue and began to march. The trickle became a flood and, at 11:20 A.M., ten minutes ahead of schedule, the March began, with the followers leading. The marchers moved in two great waves, shoulder to shoulder, black people and white people, Jews and Gentiles, Old Negroes and New Negroes, organi-

zation men and radicals, Hebrews from Brooklyn, sharecroppers from Mississippi, Puritans from New England. On they came, a riot of sound and color, signs bobbling above the sea of their heads, Spirituals coming from the well of their throats; on they came, feet pounding on the hot pavement of history; on they came, wave after wave beating against the sandy beach of American indifference.

At the Lincoln Monument, the marchers regrouped on both sides of the reflecting pool and deployed under the giant elms and oaks. They stretched almost a mile to the east and stood in scattered groups in a great semicircle around the steps of the Monument where the speakers and honored guests were seated.

For almost three hours, the multitude listened to speakers who demanded immediate passage of a Civil Rights Bill and immediate implementation of the basic guarantees of the Declaration of Independence and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Out of the blurred montage of words and symbols seven clear pictures emerge: a picture of Asa Philip Randolph, the Father of the March, saying that this was the beginning and not the ending and that "wave after wave" would come back to Washington if immediate changes were not made in American life; of Eugene Carson Blake, head of the Presbyterian Church, indicting American Christians and saying repeatedly, "We come—late, late we come"; of Rabbi Joachim Prinz recalling the downfall of Germany and saying that the basic problem, then and now, was not evil but silence; of Mahalia Jackson rolling one hundred years of wrong into one lucid phrase; of John Lewis calling for a real, "a serious revolution;" of Martin Luther King, Jr., etching the blueprints of a dream; of Benjamin E. Mays speaking frankly to God in an eloquent benediction: "Here we are, God, one hundred and eighty million people . . . *please*, God, in this moment of crisis, give the United States wisdom . . . guide her, keep her, save her and help the weary travelers to

overcome. . . . Here we are, God, *please*. . . ."

Let us consider Mahalia Jackson, Martin King and John Lewis: they are the keys to that day.

There is a nerve that lies beneath the smoothest of exteriors, a nerve four hundred years old and throbbing with hurt and indignation. Mahalia Jackson penetrated the facades and exposed the nerve to public view. She was singing *I Been 'Buked and I Been Scorned*, embellishing it with great gasps and whoops and hollers, and then, suddenly, it happened.

I'm gonna tell my Lord,
When I get home.
I'm gonna tell my Lord,
When I get home.
Just how *long* you've
Been treating me wrong.

A spasm ran through the crowd.

The button-down men in front and the old women way back came to their feet, screaming and shouting. They had not known that this thing was in them and that they wanted it touched. From different places, in different ways, with different dreams, they had come and now, hearing this sung, they were one.

John Lewis, twenty-three, the new chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, came on, working in the big leagues for the first time. He had come armed with a prepared speech which said that politicians, all politicians, were low, despicable people—and that none of them meant the Negro any good. ("Where is *our* party?") He had wanted to tell them that Negroes were still being whipped for trying to vote, and that old men and women were still in jail. He had wanted to tell them that if the March were only a gesture that it was obscene; that he and his kind, the children who made the revolution, had nothing but contempt for old men who dealt in gestures. He had wanted to say things about marching through Dixie

like Sherman—he had wanted to say so many things but a white archbishop objected and the leaders persuaded him to tone the speech down.

He came on now, scowling, and he said pretty much what he had intended to say—only in nicer language. And when he finished the older Negro leaders rushed to pump his hand, and most of the white liberals sat silent.

A second man, now: Martin Luther King, Jr., coming to the lectern late in the afternoon, when the shadows were long on the grass. He read for a time from a prepared speech and then he began to improvise, speaking of a dream big enough to include all men and all children, speaking of the day when little black boys and little black girls would join hands with little white boys and little white girls as brothers and sisters.

"I have a dream," he said, over and over, and each elaboration evoked hysterical cheers.

It was not so much the words, eloquent as they were, as the manner of saying them. The rhythms and the intonation and the halts and the breaks; these called back all the old men and women who had this dream and died, dishonored; called back rickety Negro churches on dirt roads and the men and women who sat in them, called them back and found them not wanting, nor their hoping in vain. The rhythms and the intonation called back all the struggle and all the pain and all the agony, and held forth the possibility of triumph; they called back Emmett Till and Medgar Evers and all the others; called back ropes and chains and bombs and screams in the night; called back one-room walk-up flats and roaches and rats, called them back and said they would soon be over.

When King finished, grown men and women wept unashamedly.

The speechmaking over, the songs sung, the prayers said, the people got back on the buses and trains and planes and went in the night to the places from whence they had come, mar-

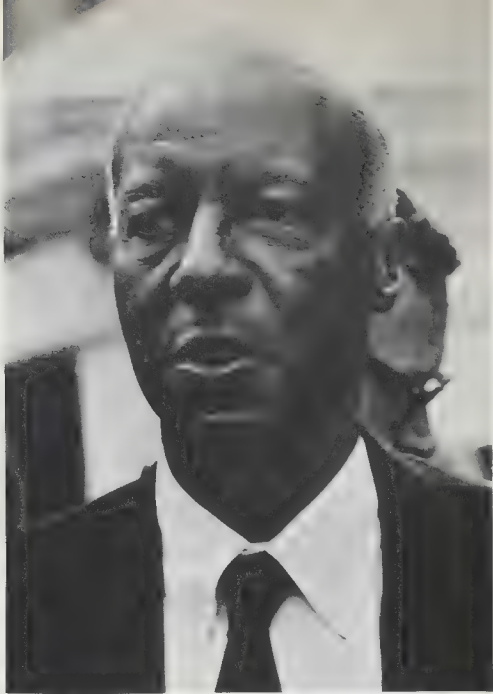
veling at the strange thing that had moved inside them. No one could say, really, whether they had made any measurable impact on Congress. Almost everyone agreed, however, that the March impressed millions of whites in America and Europe.

More important, however, was the impact of the March on the participants. If the March changed no votes in Congress or no hearts in America, it did, at least, change the marchers themselves. Those who thought, in the beginning, that it was too respectable, and those who thought it was too radical; the young people who didn't want to wait another minute, and the old ones who had waited for eighty-one and eighty-two and ninety-four years; the smooth operators from New York and Chicago and the fieldhands from Mississippi, the church women from Atlanta and the gay crowd from Harlem: for a moment in time they were one.

They would disagree later; there would be disappointments, bombings, outrages; there would be backsliders and it would be necessary perhaps to do it all over again; but for one moment, for one unforgettable moment, the militants and the moderates, the timid liberals and the fire-eating activists, the old church women and the barmaids: for one single, electrifying moment they were one. And they would remember. If the bridge held, and if it didn't rain, men and women would look back on this day and tell their children and grandchildren: There was a March in the middle of the twentieth century, the biggest demonstration for civil rights in history—and I was there.

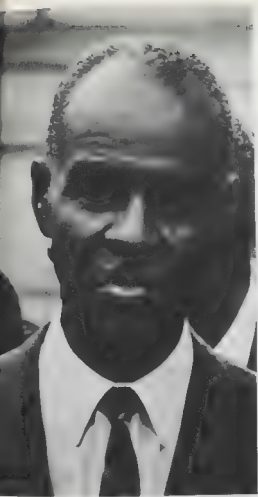
the leaders called

Asa Philip Randolph, Father of the March, President, Negro American Labor Council lone Negro member of the Executive Council of AFL-CIO; International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He proposed the first civil rights "March on Washington" in 1940-1941 which resulted in President Roosevelt's famous Executive Order 8802, creating the President's Fair Employment Practice Committee.



Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Chairman of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. The NAACP has been in the forefront of the civil rights struggle on every level since its founding in 1909.

Whitney M. Young Jr., Executive Director of the National Urban League and former dean of Atlanta University's School of Social Work. As a member of the President's Committee on Youth Employment and the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces, the Urban League methods, techniques and resources for guidance of minority youth have been utilized.



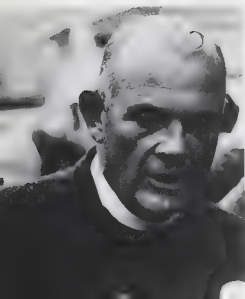
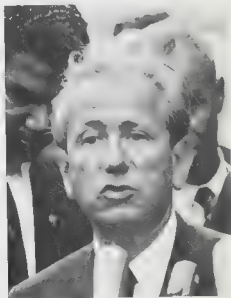
James Farmer, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality; a pioneer in the development of non-violent, direct-action, and leader of the 1961 Freedom Ride chose to remain in jail in Plaquemine, Louisiana to dramatize the need for the march. His place was taken by Core National Chairman *Floyd McKissick*. McKissick is author of the Durham Plan, the successful negotiating formula used in achieving peaceful integration in North Carolina.



Mathew Ahman, executive director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.

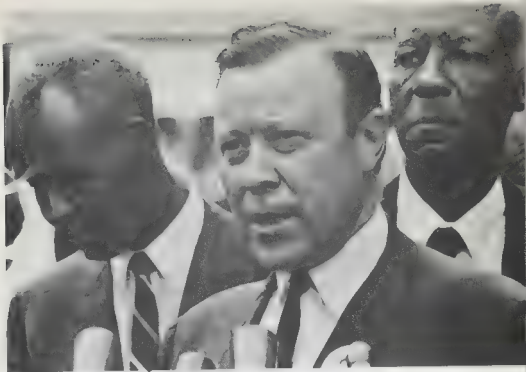
Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President of the American Jewish Congress.

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Vice-Chairman, Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches and executive head of the United Presbyterian Church of the USA.



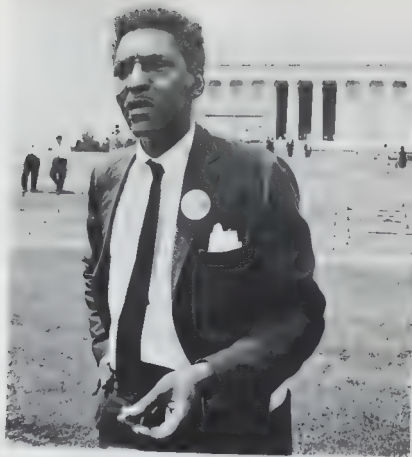
Walter Reuther, Vice-president and head of the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO; President of the United Automobile Workers Union and recipient of the CIO Award for his fight against racial discrimination in labor.

John Lewis, Chairman, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, twenty-three year old veteran of the front-lines in the army of civil rights demonstrators. Arrested 24 times, attacked by white mobs in South Carolina during the 1961 Freedom Rides, Lewis is a member of the Nashville Group, from which much of SNICK's militant leadership has come.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., founder and President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The foremost advocate of the non-violent, passive resistance philosophy of the civil rights movement, he helped direct the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the Birmingham Demonstrations of the spring of 1963.



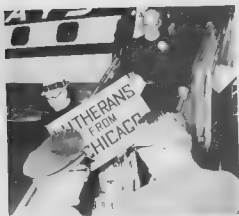


a tactician planned . . .

Bayard Rustin, Deputy Director, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, was charged with the responsibility for planning the logistics of the march. As August 28 approached Rustin and a staff of volunteers across the nation supervised the minute details involved in moving an army of people into and out of Washington in a single day.

the people answered





they came
on foot
by plane,
by train,
by bus,
and roller skates







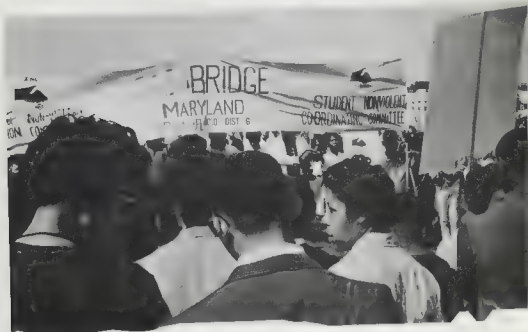


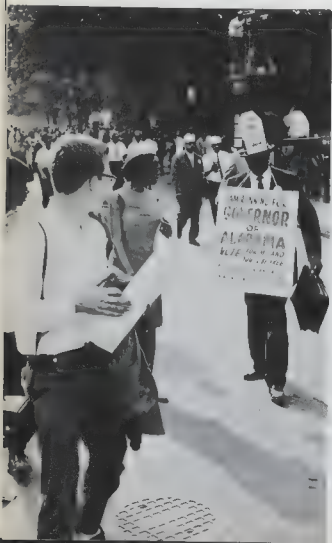
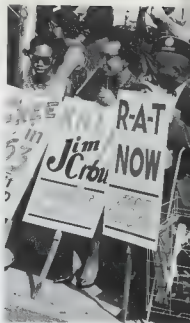
from back Africa and darkest Mississipp





from Prince Edward County and Cambridge, Maryland







HOME

lower the

HOME

HOME RULE

HOME RULE

WE DEMAND
DECENT HOUSING
NOW!

Fourth Government

VOTING
RIGHTS

BCHRC

DECENT
HOUSING
NOW!

WE MARCH
FOR
JOBS
AND A
DECENT
PAY
NOW!

WE MARCH
FOR
CATHOLIC
JEWS
PROTESTANT
NOW!

WE MARCH
FOR
JOBS FOR ALL
A DECENT PAY
NOW!

WE DEMAND
AN END
POLICE
BRUTALITY
NOW!

WE MARCH
FOR
FIRST CLASS
CITIZENSHIP
NOW!

WE MARCH
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NOW!

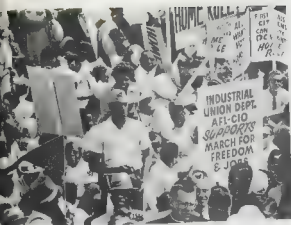


they all came
young
old









and gathered together





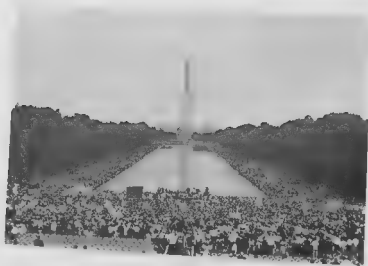


while entertainers entertained





in this historic place





and then it was time
to remind them what has been
to tell them what must be





to see,
to hear,
to testify...

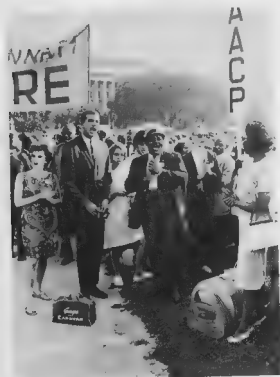






to sing, to shout
and to tell the world...





we been 'buked
and we been scorned
...but we shall
overcome ... someday



this was the day
a young man told of his dream
and 250,000 people sat in the sun,
bathed their feet, drank water and coffee,
ate hot dogs and ham sandwiches,
called home or napped and some fainted





















this was the day...
celebrities were faces
in the crowd...



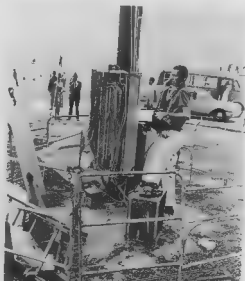






peace and
tranquility prevailed







the word was carried by
telstar and every other
form of communication...



then it was over



the day had come to pass



statement on the march

By John F. Kennedy

President of the United States

We have witnessed today in Washington tens of thousands of Americans — both Negro and white — exercising their right to assemble peaceably and direct the widest possible attention to a great national issue. Efforts to secure equal treatment and equal opportunity for all without regard to race, color, creed or nationality are neither novel nor difficult to understand. What is different today is the intensified and widespread public awareness of the need to move forward in achieving these objectives — objectives which are older than this nation.

Although this summer has seen remarkable progress in translating civil rights from principles into practices, we have a very long way yet to travel. One cannot help but be impressed with the deep fervor and the quiet dignity that characterizes the thousands who have gathered in the Nation's Capital from across the country to demonstrate their faith and confidence in our democratic form of government. History has seen many demonstrations — of widely varying character and for a whole host of reasons. As our thoughts travel to other demonstrations that have occurred in different parts of the world, this nation can properly be proud of the demonstration that has occurred here today. The leaders of the organizations sponsoring the March and all who have participated in it deserve our appreciation for the detailed preparations that made it possible and for the orderly manner in which it has been conducted.

The executive branch of the Federal Government will continue its efforts to obtain increased employment and to eliminate discrimination in employment practices, two of the prime goals of the March. In addition, our efforts to secure enactment of the legislative proposals made to the Congress will be maintained,



including not only the Civil Rights Bill, but also proposals to broaden and strengthen the manpower development and training program, the youth employment bill, amendments to the vocational education program, the establishment of a work-study program for high school age youth, strengthening of the adult basic education provisions in the Administration's education program and the amendments proposed to the public welfare work-relief and training program. This nation can afford to achieve the goals of full employment policy — it cannot afford to permit the potential skills and educational capacity of its citizens to be unrealized.

The cause of twenty million Negroes has been advanced by the program conducted so appropriately before the nation's shrine to the Great Emancipator, but even more significant is the contribution to all mankind.

marchers' pledge

Standing before the Lincoln Memorial on the 28th of August, in the centennial year of emancipation, I affirm my complete personal commitment for the struggle for jobs and freedom for all Americans.

To fulfill that commitment, I pledge that I will not relax until victory is won.

I pledge that I will join and support all actions undertaken in good faith in accord with time-honored democratic tradition of nonviolent protest, or peaceful assembly and petition and of redress through the courts and the legislative process.

I pledge to carry the message of the March to my friends and neighbors back home and to arouse them to an equal commitment and an equal effort. I will march and I will write letters. I will demonstrate and I will vote. I will work to make sure that my voice and those of my brothers ring clear and determined from every corner of our land.

I will pledge my heart and my mind and my body, unequivocally and without regard to personal sacrifice, to the achievement of social peace through social justice.

marchers' goals

A comprehensive Civil Rights Bill from the present Congress, including provisions guaranteeing access to public accommodations, adequate and integrated education, protection of the right to vote, better housing, and authority for the Attorney General to seek injunctive relief when individuals' constitutional rights are violated.

Withholding of Federal funds from all programs in which discrimination exists.

Desegregation of all public schools in 1963.

A reduction in Congressional seats in states where citizens are disenfranchised.

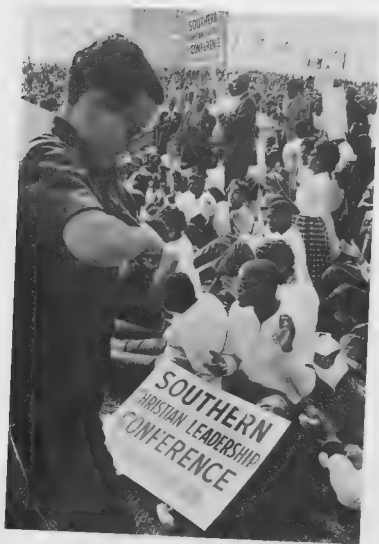
A stronger Executive order prohibiting discrimination in all housing programs supported by Federal funds.

A massive Federal program to train and place unemployed workers.

An increase in the minimum wage to \$2 an hour. The Federal minimum, covering workers in interstate industry, is now \$1 15 an hour and will rise to \$1.25 next Tuesday.

Extension of the Fair Labor Standards Act to include exempted fields of employment.

A Federal Fair Employment Practices Act barring discrimination in all employment.



I have a dream . . .

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

In a sense we have come to our Nation's Capital to cash a check. When the architects of our Republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have

come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of Democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. 1963 is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the Nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our Nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here

today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "when will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed "We hold these truths

to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the

pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvacious peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from every hill and mole hill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of that old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

we shall overcome

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe } (Repeat these lines)
We shall overcome some day.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand
We'll walk hand in hand, some day,

The truth will make us free, the truth will make us free,
The truth will make us free some day,

The Lord will see us through, the Lord will see us through,
The Lord will see us through some day.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day,

We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace,
We shall live in peace some day,

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today,

The whole wide world around, the whole wide world around,
The whole wide world around some day,

august 28, 1963

they were there

page

- 42 t. bobby darin
b. josh white
- 43 ossie davis
joan baez
- 44 lonnie sattin
josh white
- 45 f. odetta
b. burt lancaster with scroll of american signatures from europe
- 47 adam clayton powell (white suit) and group
of u. s. congressmen on steps of memorial
- 50 t. mrs. rosa parks
b. rev. ralph abernathy
- 51 f. rev. fred shuttlesworth
b. mrs. daisy bates
- 52 f. mahalia jackson
b. marian anderson
- 54 dr. martin luther king, jr.
- 66 t.l. daisy bates, lena horne
t.r. ralph bunche
b.l. josephine baker
b.r. jackie robinson, son david, and dick gregory
- 67 t.l. charlton heston, harry belafonte and burt lancaster
t.r. mahalia jackson
c. diahann carroll, paul newman
b. robert weaver, george l. p. weaver
- 68 t.l. sidney poitier
c.l. dr. benjamin mays, sammy davis, jr.
c.r. charlton heston, james baldwin, marlon brando
b. edwin berry, samuel d. proctor
- 76 a. philip randolph

t. - top
b. - bottom
c. - center
t.l. - top left
t.r. - top right
c.l. - center left
c.r. - center right

